Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BA (University of Victoria, 2015)

“The Classical Reception of the Hybrid Minotaur”

Department of Greek and Roman Studies

Wednesday, August 22, 2018
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Brendan Burke, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Laurel Bowman, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Eric Miller, Department of English, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Deborah Begoray, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This thesis offers an interpretation of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur that accounts for its popularity in fifth century Athens. The myth of the Minotaur had particular political resonance in Classical Athens because of the Minotaur’s hybrid character and eastern connotations. In the wake of the Persian wars, Theseus came to embody Athenian democratic and anti-Barbarian ideals. His canonical opponent, the Minotaur, represented the enemy of the Athenian citizen: an eastern hybrid such as the Persian/Carian/Lycian groups of Anatolia and the east. By aligning the Minotaur with his Near Eastern origins, the story of Theseus sailing to confront the Minotaur can be viewed as the story of Greeks, specifically Athenians, facing what was for them, very real threats from the east. By integrating iconographical and mythological evidence for the myths of Theseus and placing the Minotaur myth within the wider historical and political context of fifth century Athens, this thesis shows that the hybrid Minotaur was a stand in for the Persians.